

# Modesty—God Cares About How You Dress

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## INTRODUCTION:

- i. The times we live in are clearly marked by an absence of modesty!
  - Today's reality: the more outlandish, risqué and ostentatious, the better!
  - In many ways, Christians are distinguishable by the way they attire themselves—modestly
    - This might be in the clothing choices they make—modest apparel
    - But it also includes the way they conduct themselves—modest demeanor
- ii. The emphasis of this lesson will be upon modesty in our choices of clothing!
  - This will not be 'my opinion' – we want to understand the will of God – **Eph. 5:17 (cf. Rom. 14)**
  - I am not going to ask you to take my word for what is presented here – **Luke 6:39-40**
  - Our aim is to take a good, hard look at God's word and rightly divide it on this topic – **2 Tim. 2:15**
- iii. Immodest apparel is a subject that has plagued God's children...
  - The temptation to 'fit in' in the world has caused God's children to make unwise clothing choices
  - The availability of clothing in stores has also, at times, made dressing modestly difficult
  - Elders, preachers and parents have, in many ways, thrown in the towel on this topic
  - Much of the teaching on this matter is too vague or too opinion laden to have any lasting impact
- iv. Why do people dress immodestly? Christians dress immodestly for the same reasons!
  - Ignorant or untaught
  - To draw attention to themselves
  - Conformity or acceptance
  - Carelessness and a lack of forethought
  - Apathy and indifference – they simply don't care!
- v. God cares about how we dress? Therefore, so should we! Let us enter this study with an open heart, an open mind and an open Bible.

## DISCUSSION:

### I. GOD CARES ENOUGH TO LEAVE US SOME COMMANDS TO OBEY

- A. Peter's instruction to wives directly and husbands indirectly tells us that God cares – **1 Pet. 3:1-7**
  1. This passage gives us three key attributes of a Christian's conduct...
    - a. **Chaste** – *pure from carnality, chaste modesty* (#53)
    - b. **Gentle** (meek, KJV) – *mildness of disposition, gentleness of spirit, meekness* (Strong's #4239)
    - c. **Quiet** – *quiet, tranquil* (#2272)
  2. Important lessons from this passage...
    - a. The phrase "putting on of apparel" speaks directly to our clothing choices
      - (1) They must manifest holiness – "in former times, holy women..."
      - (2) They must manifest a trust in God – "...who trust in God"
    - b. Modesty begins in the spirit and manifests itself in every aspect of appearance and conduct
    - c. How one dresses and acts reflects the character of their inner man!
- B. Paul's instruction to Timothy regarding the saints tells us God cares – **1 Tim. 2:8-10**
  1. This passage directly tells us that Christian's "apparel" must be...
    - a. **Modest** – *well arranged, seemingly, modest* (#2887)
      - (1) With **propriety** (**shamefacedness**, KJV) – *a sense of honor, modest, bashfulness, reverence, regard for others, respect* (#127)
      - (2) With **moderation** (**sobriety**, KJV) – *soundness of mind, self-control, sobriety* (#4997)
    - b. **Proper for a woman professing godliness** - *announce, proclaim, making a claim of* (#1861)
  2. "With good works" distinguishes our conduct from our apparel in this text
- C. Two key facts must be noted from these contexts...
  1. We can be immodest in an ostentatious way—too much of the wrong kind of apparel

2. We can be immodest in an suggestive way—too little clothing

## II. GOD CARES ENOUGH NOT TO LEAVE US WITHOUT FURTHER GUIDANCE

- A. The topic of modest and immodest apparel can often become a controversial subject
  1. The danger of moral relativism...
    - a. What is modest to me might not be modest to you!
    - b. What is chaste to me might not be chaste to you!
    - c. What is shameful to me might not be shameful to you!
  2. The danger of engendering controversy...
    - a. Who is to determine *specifically* what is modest, shameful, chaste, meek, quiet and proper?
    - b. Who can say *for sure* what professes godliness in regards to apparel?
    - c. Is there only gray area or can a finer line be drawn?
  3. Is there a more specific standard?
    - a. Should we turn to the world (i.e., customs, fashions, styles and time)?
    - b. Should we let our individual consciences decide?
    - c. Should we turn to the subjective reasoning of men?
    - d. Should we dig deeper into God’s word to see if He has given us further guidance? – **Luke 6:48**
- B. We must consider the whole counsel of God! - **2 Tim. 3:16-17; Jer. 10:23; Rom. 15:4; 1 Cor. 10:11; Acts 17:11**

## III. GOD CARED ABOUT THE ATTIRE OF HIS CHILDREN IN THE OLD TESTAMENT

- A. God cared about how Adam and Eve dressed! – **Gen. 2:25; 3:1-11**
  1. What does God consider **NAKED**?
    - a. **Gen. 2:25** – Naked and not ashamed – first thing they realized after eating fruit
    - b. **Gen. 3:7a** – Naked and ashamed – they knew they were naked
    - c. **Gen. 3:7b** – Tried to cover themselves - Heb. Chagorah (#2289) – girdle, loin-covering, belt, loin-cloth, armour
    - d. **Gen. 3:10** – Still naked (also ashamed and afraid) – they hid themselves
    - e. **Gen. 3:11** – God confirms their nakedness – their upper and lower body was exposed – If God considered this naked, shouldn’t we?
  2. What does God consider **CLOTHED**? – **Gen. 3:21**
    - a. God made them clothing in the form of tunics of skin (or coats of skin) – *kutonet*
      - (1) Strong’s (#3801) – tunic, under-garment, a long shirt-like garment usually of linen
      - (2) Wilson (p. 81) – a tunic worn next to the skin by men and women chiefly of the priest and Levites, generally with sleeves, to the knees, but seldom to the ankles
      - (3) Brown, Driver, Briggs, Hebrew and English Lexicon (p. 509) – A tunic... generally with sleeves, coming down to the knees, rarely to the ankles
      - (4) Nelson’s Illustrated Encyclopedia of Bible Facts, (pp. 482-483) – “The tunic, a kimono-like inner garment reaching to the knees or ankles, was worn next to the skin. Both men and women wore tunics made from cotton, linen, or wool. ...The earliest of these garments were made without sleeves and reached only to the knees. Later the inner garment extended to the wrists and ankles.”
      - (5) The Zondervan Pictorial Bible Dictionary (p. 225) - “This garment usually had long sleeves, and extended down to the ankles when worn as a dress coat, and was held in place by a girdle. Hard-working men, slaves, and prisoners wore them more abbreviated—sometimes even to their knees, and without sleeves—as shown on the Behistun inscription.”
  3. God set a standard “in the beginning” and He has not changed – **Mal. 3:6; Heb. 13:8; Jas. 1:17**
- B. God cared about how the priests dressed! – **cf. 1 Pet. 2:5, 9**
  1. God specified clothing for the priests that would cover their nakedness – **Ex. 28:40-42**
    - a. Tunics (coats, KJV) – *kutonet* (#3801) – glory and beauty
    - b. Linen trousers (breeches, KJV) – *miknas* (#4370) – *underwear*
      - (1) To cover their nakedness
      - (2) Cover from the loins to the thighs
  2. God specified that there were to be no steps going up to the altar – **Ex. 20:26**
    - a. To avoid their nakedness from being exposed



- b. Do we make the same considerations in our attire? Are we being conscientious of these things?
  - (1) Standing up, a skirt or shorts might cover the thigh, but what about when we sit down?
  - (2) When we bend over while wearing a loose blouse or shirt, do we expose our chests?
  - (3) What about slits in dresses, tight clothing, transparent clothing?
- C. God used nakedness to reveal the shame of a person!
  - 1. If the **thighs** were exposed, it was shameful – **Isa. 47:2-3**
    - a. Metaphorically speaks of Babylon, but principle holds true
    - b. Consistent line for the lower body!
  - 2. If the **buttocks** were exposed, it was shameful – **Isa. 20:4 (cf. 2 Sam. 10:4; Isa. 3:17; Jer. 13:22; Mic. 1:11)**
    - a. Consider the modern day swimsuit
    - b. Consider clothing that is too tight (spandex, leotards, tight fitting jeans – changing skin color)
    - c. Consider clothing that is too loose (these long baggy shorts that boys are wearing)
  - 3. If the **breasts** were exposed, it was nakedness – **Ezek. 16:7-8**
    - a. Metaphorically speaks of Jerusalem, but principle remains true
    - b. What kind of clothing do we wear that exposes our breasts?
    - c. This applies to men also – **cf. John 13:25**

#### IV. RIGHTEOUS MEN CARED HOW THEY WERE DRESSED IN THE NEW TESTAMENT!

- A. Peter cared enough to put on his outer garment in the presence of the Lord – **John 21:7**
  - 1. Naked (#1131) – clad in undergarments only (the out garments or cloak being laid aside)
  - 2. What do we typically do when we go swimming?
- B. The man healed of a demon possession cared how he was attired – **Luke 8:27, 35**
  - 1. When he was possessed, Satan had him running around naked!
  - 2. When he was healed and in his right mind, he was clothed!

#### V. CHRISTIANS SHOULD CARE ABOUT HOW WE DRESS!

- A. Lust and stumbling blocks, men and women
  - 1. Have you ever wondered why the scriptures seem to focus on women in regards to modest apparel?
    - a. Women are *specifically* addressed regarding modest apparel – **1 Pet. 3:1-6; 1 Tim. 2:8-10**
    - b. Men are *specifically* instructed not to lust after a woman – **Matt. 5:28**
  - 2. Women often ask, “Why do I have to alter my apparel because some man cannot control his dirty mind?”
    - a. Do you want to be the one to cast the stumbling block? – **Luke 17:1-2**
    - b. Are we dressing to draw attention to ourselves (i.e., turn heads)? – **cf. Prov. 7:10**
    - c. Some men will lust anyway—but it will not be because of your apparel choices!
- B. Immodest apparel and children
  - 1. Should we allow our children to wear immodest apparel?
    - a. Train them up in the way they should go – **Prov. 22:6**
    - b. Let them bear the yoke in their youth – **Lam. 3:27**
    - c. Teach them the scriptures from their youth – **2 Tim. 3:15**
  - 2. There are perverts out there who will prey on children for this very reason!
- C. Is immodest clothing always immodest?
  - 1. Sports? Work? Weddings?
  - 2. In what circumstance should a Christian surrender his modesty (i.e., stop being a Christian)?
- D. What is influencing our dress?
  - 1. The world – **Rom. 12:1-2; 1 Pet. 4:4; Ex. 23:2; 2 Cor. 10:12**
  - 2. Our conscience – **1 Tim. 4:2; Jer. 6:15**
  - 3. God’s word – **2 Tim. 2:15**



#### CONCLUSION:

- i. I challenge you to carefully consider what we have talked about this evening...

- Make it a part of your family’s dialogue
  - Make it a family issue to check one another on these issues
  - I am not trying to be Pharisaical (making laws where there are no laws), I am just demonstrating that God has set forth a pattern that helps us to understand his feelings about this moral issue—God truly does care about how we dress! Do you?
- ii. With all of this talk about keeping our garments on, there is one garment I would suggest now that you immediately remove—as the song we are about to sing teaches, “lay aside the garment that is stained with sin” (Are You Washed In The Blood?)